

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4185

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECTC: SOVIET REQUEST FOR US-SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY
EXCHANGE

1. SUMMARY. DURING MY COURTESY CALL MARCH 22 ON A.P. SHITIKOV, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE UNION, USSR SUPREME SOVIET, HE STRONGLY ADVOCATED MOVEMENT ON ESTABLISHING A US-SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE. SHITIKOV PLANCED BLAME FOR HOLD UP IN ESTABLISHING REGULAR INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONTACTS ON US CONGRESS. HE SAID SOVIET SIDE HAD MADE SEVERAL INITIATIVES ON EXCHANGE WITHOUT RESULT. SOVIETS STAND READY TO DO EVERYTHING NECESSARY TO RECEIVE OFFICIAL CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES, BUT FIND INCONVENIENT CONGRESSIONAL PRACTICE OF SENDING REPRESENTATIVES TO USSR AS TOURISTS. IT IS POSSIBLE THIS SUBJECT MAY BE TOUCHED UPON IN TALKS WITH SECRETARY. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER INTRODUCTORY EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTIRES SHITIKOV LAUNCHED INTO LENGTHY MONOLOGUE ON PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE. HE SAID PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE HAD BEEN TALKED ABOUT DURING SUMMIT MEETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY GENERAL BREZHNEV. HOWEVER, IT HAS NOT PROVED POSSIBLE TO ORGANIZE REGULAR CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SUPREME SOVIET AND US CONGRESS.
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3. SHITIKOV SAID HOLD UP IN ORGANIZING EXCHANGE IS US POSITION THAT VISITING SOVIET DELEGATIONS MUST MAKE ALL THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. SOVIET APPROACH IS DIFFERENT. VISITING DELEGATION IS FULLY TAKEN CARE OF UPON ARRIVAL AND SOVIET SIDE ORGANIZES ENTIRE PROGRAM. SHITIKOV DISPARAGED IDEA THAT CONGRESS DOES NOT HAVE MONEY FOR SUCH PROGRAMS. HE NOTED US CONGRESS HAS EXCHANGES WITH UK AND CANADA AND SAID WE, THUS, DO NOT TAKE THIS SERIOUSLY.

4. SHITIKOV THEN SAID THAT DURING LAST FEW YEARS CONGRESS HAS SENT MANY REPRESENTATIVES TO USSR AS TOURISTS. (HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO 19 MEMBER SENATE DELEGATION WHICH VISITED HERE IN APRIL 1973.) HOWEVER, THEY DO NOT ACT LIKE TOURISTS, SINCE THEY ASK FOR APPOINTMENTS WITH LEADERS AND OFFICIALS AND EXPECT TO BE TREATED AS OFFICIALS THEMSELVES. MOREOVER, THEY ARE RECEIVED. "EVEN I RECEIEVE THEM." THIS ARRANGEMENT, HOWEVER, CAUSES "INCONVENIENCE", AND SOVIET SIDE IS INCREASINGLY DISTURBED BY IT. SOVIETS CANNOT HAVE SUBSTANTIVE TALKS WITH "TOURISTS," YET IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTABLISH REGULAR BASIS FOR HANDLING CONTACTS WITH US CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES SINCE WE DON NOT HAVE MUTUAL RELATIONS IN FORM OF PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE.

5. SHITIKOV SAID SOVIET SIDE SEVERAL MONTHS AGO SENT LETTERS TO SPEAKER OF HOUSE AND TO PRESIDENT PRO TEM OF SENATE CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES, BUT NO RESPONSE HAS BEEN RECEIVED. SOVIETS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS THROUGH AMBASSADOR DOBRYNIN AND IN OTHER CONTACTS, BUT TO NO AVAIL. SHITIKOV ARE ALSO FLEXIBLE ON NUMBERS IN PARTIES, PROGRAM, LENGTH OF VISITS, WHICH SIDE WOULD COME FIRST, ETC. HE STRESSED THAT SOVIETS ARE WAITING FOR A POSITIVE RESPONSE.

6. SHITIKOV CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT AT MEETINGS OF INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION SOVIET AND US DELEGATIONS, PARTICULARLY REP. DERWINSKI AND HIMSELF, HAVE COMMON LANGUAGE ON MANY THINGS. BUT ON PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE NO COMMON LEANGUAGE HAS BEEN POSSIBLE. STILL, THE ABSENCE OF AN AGREEMENT ON EXCHANGES IS A BAD THING. WHEN SOMETING IS DISCUSSED AT THE SUMMIT, IT SHOULD BE DONE. AS OUR RELATIONS IMPROVE IN OTHER AREAS, THIS SHOULD ALSO BE REFLECTED IN THE PARLIAMENTARY AREA.
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SOVIETS ARE READY TO RECEIVE DELEGATIONS, BUT OFFICIALLY. TOURISTS ARE TOURISTS. OFFICIALS CAN SIT AND DISCUSS EVERYTHING.

7. I SAID I WOULD REPORT SHITIKOV'S REMARKS FULLY TO MY GOVERNMENT AND THAT I HOPED PROGRESS COULD BE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH US/SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGES. I NOTED MY CONVERSATION WITH VICE PRESIDENT PRIOR TO MY DEPARTURE AND THE PERSONAL AND POSITIVE INTEREST HE HAD EXPRESSED IN THIS SUBJECT. I ALSO

REFERRED TO FINANCIAL PROBLEMS IN REGARD TO CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET, WHICH WERE REAL, AND TO DIFFERENCES IN APPROACH OF OUR RESPECTIVE PARLIAMENTARY BODIES TOWARD QUESTION OF FORMAL EXCHANGES.

8. PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY MEETING WITH SHITIKOV (PRAVDA MARCH 23) NOTES THAT DISCUSSION DEALT WITH US-SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE.

9. COMMENT: SINCE MY ARRIVAL SHITIKOV'S REMARKS ARE AT LEAST SECOND INSTANCE OF SOVIET HIGH LEVEL INTEREST IN PROMOTING PARLIAMENTARY EXCHANGE. PRESIDENT PODGORNYY RAISED MATTER WITH ME FOLLOWING MY PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS. ABSENCE OF PROGRESS ON THIS PROGRAM CLEARLY RANKLES HERE AND HAS POTENTIAL FOR CAUSING DIFFICULTIES IN THE FUTURE IN HANDLING CONGRESSIONAL GROUPS VISITING THE USSR.

10. I AM AWARE THAT, ASIDE FROM ANY SUBSTANTIVE RESERVATIONS THERE MAY BE IN THE CONGRESS ABOUT INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH AN EXCHANGE, THERE ARE ALSO PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN CONDUCTING THE PROGRAM ON SOVIET TERMS, I.E., THE RECEIVING SIDE PAYS ARRANGEMENT. NONETHELESS, I BELIEVE WE SHOULD ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO SOVIET INITIATIVE ON THIS PROGRAM AND MAKE SERIOUS EFFORT TO RESPOND TO SOVIET INTEREST WITH CONCRETE SUGGESTIONS.

11. IT IS POSSIBLE THIS MATTER MAY BE RAISED DURING COURSE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT.
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